Pfizer's Depo-Provera linked to 500% higher brain tumor risk; FDA stays silent

11/06/2025 // Cassie B. // **500** Views

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- Pfizer’s Depo-Provera injectable birth control dramatically increases brain tumor risks, confirmed by multiple studies including a 2024 French analysis.
- Canada and the EU mandate meningioma warnings, but the FDA refuses to act, leaving American women uninformed and at risk.
- More than 1,200 women are suing Pfizer for failing to warn them, with some suffering permanent cognitive damage after brain surgeries.
- Pfizer’s own lower-dose version, Depo-subQ Provera 104, is safer, yet the company continues offering the high-risk formula for profit.
- Non-hormonal birth control options exist, but millions of women remain unaware of Depo-Provera’s dangers due to regulatory failure and corporate negligence.

For decades, millions of women have trusted Depo-Provera, Pfizer’s injectable birth control, believing it was a safe, convenient way to prevent unwanted pregnancy. But a growing body of research, including a bombshell 2024 French study, now confirms what hundreds of injured women are already painfully aware of: this drug dramatically increases the risk of brain tumors. Yet while Canada and the EU mandate warnings to protect women, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) remains silent, leaving American women in the dark.

The evidence is undeniable. A *BMJ* study found women using Depo-Provera for over a year faced a fivefold higher risk of meningioma surgery. Another U.S. analysis revealed long-term users had more than double the risk of developing these tumors, with women who started using it after age 30 facing a 277% higher risk. Despite these findings, Pfizer's U.S. label still omits any mention of brain tumors, even as more than 1,200 women sue the company for failing to warn them.

The dangerous coverup

The dangers aren't new. According to lawsuit filings, research dating back to 1983 linked progesterone to meningiomas. Whether or not Pfizer was aware of these early findings, the company only sought an FDA warning in 2023, which was decades later and only after lawsuits began piling up. The agency rejected the request, claiming the studies were insufficient. Meanwhile, women like Randi Hickman, who endured two brain surgeries and permanent cognitive damage, were never told about the risks.

"They never warned about this risk of meningioma or to be on the lookout for the symptoms," said attorney Ellen Relkin, representing hundreds of affected women. "Many of our clients had excruciating headaches or dizziness for years, and no one connected it to the drug."

Pfizer insists Depo-Provera is safe, but the data tells a different story. The drug's synthetic progestin, medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA), binds to progesterone receptors in meningiomas, fueling tumor growth. Even Pfizer's own lower-dose version, Depo-subQ Provera 104, proves safer, yet the company continues pushing the higher-risk formula.

Why are American women still unprotected?

While Canada and the EU require meningioma warnings, the FDA has failed to act. The agency's inaction is especially glaring given Depo-Provera's history: the FDA rejected it for years over cancer concerns before approving it in 1992. Now, with lawsuits mounting and studies confirming the risks, the FDA's silence raises serious questions about regulatory capture.

"A black box would be ideal because then everyone would know. They'll say it's rare, but it's not so rare—thousands of women are impacted because the drug is so widely used," Relkin said.

Meanwhile, non-hormonal options such as condoms, diaphragms, and fertility awareness carry no such dangers. Yet millions of women, unaware of the risks, keep using Depo-Provera, trusting a system that has failed them.

The message is clear: informed consent is non-negotiable. Women deserve transparency, not corporate cover-ups. As lawsuits expose Pfizer's negligence, the real question remains: How

many more women will pay the price before the FDA acts?

For those who are still using Depo-Provera, the choice is urgent. With safer alternatives available, no woman should gamble with her brain health, especially when the odds are stacked against her.

Sources for this article include:

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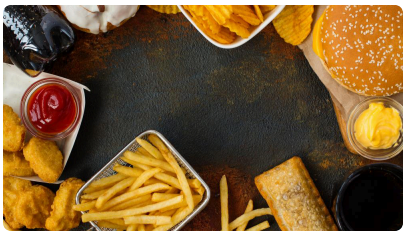

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